THE

CASE

OF THE

Master, Wardens and Company of Distillers *of* London: *Humbly offered to the Honourable the House of* COMMONS.

London v Livery Companies [Distillers]

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Maſter, Wardens and Company of DISTILLERS *of* London: *Humbly offered to the Honourable the Houſe of* COMMONS.

THAT there is a Bill now depending in this Honourable Houſe, for laying a Duty upon Compound Waters or Spirits, commonly called *Gin*; and as the Deſign of the ſaid Bill is to prevent the exceſſive Uſe of Gin, Geneva, Juniper Water, and other compound Liquors, among the People of inferior Rank, the Diſtillers are very deſirous the exceſſive Uſe of any of the ſaid Liquors, that Enervate and Debauch the common People, may, in the moſt effectual Manner, be prevented; yet humble hope, that a Trade, encouraged by ſeveral Acts of Parliament, and which has been, and ſtill may be, a Benefit to the Kingdom, may not be intirely ſuppreſſed.

The Diſtillers crave Leave, humbly to repreſent to this Honourable Houſe, that a Clauſe in the ſaid Bill, to lay a Duty on Gin, Geneva, or any Compound Waters, is ſo extenſive in its Terms, that they apprehend they ſhall be reſtrained from rectifying, cleanſing or amending with any

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Ingredient, any Brandy or Spirits made from Malt or Molaſſes, which they have now brought to ſo great Perfection, that 'tis equally as Wholeſome as *French* Brandy, and very little inferior in Flavour: And which they can't bring to ſuch Perfection, without the Uſe of ſeveral Ingredients Wholeſome in their Nature, and which make the Price of ſuch Liquors ſo dear, that the common People cannot purchaſe them, being little inferior to the Price of *French* Brandy; and if ſuch Clauſe is not explain'd in their Favour, it will tend to the intire Prohibition of the Diſtilling Trade, and the Ruin of many Thouſands concerned therein.

The Diſtillers within the Bills of Mortality, and Places adjacent, conſume not leſs than Three hundred Thouſand Quarters of Corn yearly, beſides great Quantities of Molaſſes and Sugars, the Produce of the Plantations, of which ſcarce any will be conſumed, in caſe this Bill, as 'tis now deſigned, ſhould paſs into a Law; for that *French* Brandies pay Duties upon Importation from *Holland* and *Flemiſh* Ports, not above Four Shillings *per* Gallon, and the Exciſe that now is, and intended to be added by this Bill on *Britiſh* Materials, will amount to near Six Shillings *per* Gallon, whereby our own Manufacture will be intirely deſtroyed, and give an Opportunity of Importing a foreign Manufacture, which is only purchaſed by Money.

And as the chief Intention of the ſaid Bill is to prevent the exceſſive Uſe of Compound Liquors amongſt the common People, it can never be thought that Rich Cordials, which cannot be ſold for leſs than Ten Shillings, or more, a Gallon, ſuch as Citron-Water, Uſquebaugh, Saffron-Water and Cinnamon-Water, *&c.* as alſo ſeveral Cordials made by Infuſion of Fruits, as Cherry-Brandy, Rasberry-Brandy, *&c.* which are too dear for the inferior People, were deſigned to be prohibited; beſides, this Bill is ſo Worded, that even the Liquor called *Punch*, being compounded of different Ingredients, will be within the Meaning of this Bill, and lyable to the ſame Duties as Gin.

There is a Clauſe alſo in the Bill, reſtraining the mixing one ſimple Spirit with another, ſuch as Malt Spirit with Molaſſes, or either of them, with Rum or Brandy, which will be a great Diſcouragement to the ſaid Trade, becauſe they are ſo ordered, by ſuch Mixture, that they become more agreeable to the Palate, and no leſs wholeſome to the Conſtitution.

They further beg Leave to repreſent, that the Clauſe in the ſaid Bill, which inflicts a Penalty for making or ſelling Spirits or Compound Waters under Proof, muſt frequently and unavoidably ſubject them to ſuch Penalty (though no Fraud or Abuſe is intended) from the common Accidents that naturally attend Spirits; for even emptying them out of one Cask into another, or putting them in a cold Place, and the Alteration of Weather, beſides many other Accidents, too numerous to relate, will ſomewhat reduce Spirits from Proof; but where there is Fruit, or any other

other Infuſion, it conſtantly reduces the Proof, and there can be no Rule to judge thereof; and 'tis very common for Rum, Arrack and foreign Brandy to be Imported under Proof; ſo that this Bill will ſubject them to a Penalty for what is not in their Power to Remedy.

And as every Branch of the Diſtilling Trade will be affected by this Bill, 'twill be more particularly ſo if Stock in Hand is charged with the Duties thereby intended to be laid; for the ſaid Duties are ſo large, 'tis apprehended that 'twill be impoſſible for them to vend any of the Goods they have now by them, or uſe any of the Ingredients for the Manufacturing freſh Goods, of which they have great Stocks by them; which will be ſo univerſal a Loſs to the Trade, that many Families that have lived in Credit and Reputation, muſt in a great meaſure be ruined, or at leaſt very much reduced, unleſs ſome reaſonable Time is given for them to diſpoſe of their preſent Stock; the Bill tending to nothing but an intire Prohibition: And as the dead Stocks of the Malt and Compound Diſtillers, which are very great, will intirely be uſeleſs, and their Debts, to a very great Amount, both in Town and Country, render'd very Precarious;

They hope therefore, it will be a further Inducement to this Honourable Houſe, not to Charge their Stock in Hand.

All which is humbly Submitted to the Conſideration of this Honourable Houſe.